# FAA Intercom

## STARS Shines at El Paso, Syracuse Debuts

The FAA took its first major step in modernizing air traffic control workstations at Terminal Radar Approach Control facilities when it introduced the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS) in El Paso, Texas and Syracuse, N.Y.

The workstations are the first component to become operational as part of a phased strategy to deploy STARS as a full-service system nationwide.

The state-of-the-art color displays the TRACONs received provide a number of benefits to controllers. The system features higher ambient light and

## FAA, PASS Reach Tentative Agreement

Members of the Professional Airways Systems Specialists union are considering a labor agreement reached with the FAA last month. A ratification vote on the proposed five-year labor agreement is anticipated by early next month.

PASS, which represents about 7,700 technical and support employees in the FAA's Airways Facilities Division,

## President Announces New FAA Safety Program



President Clinton announces the FAA's new safety program as Mark DeAngelis, ASAP representative from the Transport Workers Union, and Administrator Garvey look on.

A new program unveiled by the Clinton administration in conjunction with the FAA creates an open environment in which airlines and their employees are encouraged to voluntarily report safety violations and concerns.

The Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) creates new sources of safety information by accessing the insight and experiences of pilots, controllers, aircraft maintenance technicians and other aviation employees intimately involved in flight operation.

It also studies human factors in the cockpit and air traffic control towers to understand why mistakes are made and how to prevent them.

In most cases, ASAP prioritizes the gathering of information concerning aviation safety over enforcement. For instance, an airline employee who commits a violation has 24 hours to report it to his employer and the agency. In most cases, the agency will issue a simple warning rather than penalize the employee and his company. The FAA is alerted to a safety hazard — its foremost concern — while employees and airlines benefit from their honesty. This option is particularly attractive to aviation unions that

# News in Brief

## Smaller Paycheck?

Some employees might notice their paychecks seem a little smaller than expected. That's because employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees' Retirement System are contributing a higher percentage of their pay in retirement contributions.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 contains provisions that temporarily increase employees' retirement deduction rates. Beginning last month, employees contributed an additional 0.15 percent of their basic pay in retirement contributions, bringing the total withholding rate for most CSRS-covered employees to 7.4 percent. The rate will increase to 1.2 percent for employees covered by CSRS-Offset and most FERS-covered employees.

Air traffic controllers are subject to higher withholding rates under FERS and will contribute 1.7 percent. The law requires that employee rates increase by an additional 0.10 percent in January 2001. The higher deduction rates will remain in effect through December 2002.

## Car Reimbursement Rate Increases

The General Services Administration increased the mileage reimbursement rate for use of a privately owned automobile on official travel. The rate will increase from 31 cents per mile to 32.5 cents per mile to reflect costs of operating a car as determined in a cost study conducted by the GSA. The new rate became effective Jan. 14.

The mileage rates for privately owned airplanes and motorcycles remain unchanged at 88 cents per mile and 26 cents per mile, respectively.

For more information, contact Loretta Rollins at (202) 267-7360.

## New TSP Options Delayed

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board that administers the $95 billion Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) has delayed the availability of two new TSP funds.

Small cap and international funds were expected to be available May 1 for investment by employees enrolled in TSP. Employees will now have to wait until Oct. 1 while a new record-keeping system designed to support the added workload is tested.

Also under consideration is a bill that permits the TSP to accept transfers from certain other retirement systems and eliminate the waiting period to join the TSP.

## When Nature Calls

The FAA wants to help airports lead the wildlife . . . away from their facilities. The agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have published a manual to help airports combat wildlife hazards at airports.

The manual is the first of its kind in the United States and results from years of research, airport visits, and training conducted by the two agencies. It addresses wildlife hazards at airports, agencies or organizations affected by hazards, federal regulations, requirements for wildlife hazard assessments and management plans, methods to reduce hazards, and wildlife control and hazard management training for airport employees.

Collisions involving wildlife and aircraft cost the U.S. civil aviation industry more than $300 million in aircraft damage and associated costs, and almost 500,000 hours of aircraft down time. Between 1990 and 1998, 19 civil aircraft were destroyed in collisions with wildlife.

Copies of the manual may be obtained from the FAA's wildlife hazard Web site at www.faa.gov/apr/hazard.htm, or by writing: New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P. O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15270-7954.

## Construction of Atlanta TRACON Nears Completion

Construction of the new Atlanta Large Terminal Radar Approach Control facility has been completed and delivery of electronic systems has begun.

The Atlanta Large TRACON is built on 35 acres in Peachtree City outside of Atlanta. Ga. It consolidates existing TRACONs at Atlanta, Macon and Columbus, and will provide air traffic control service to more than 45 airports in Georgia.

The facility will have five terminal radar inputs and three long-range radar site



"Duck Duck Goose" is not a kid's game at Linden Airport in New Jersey. It's a matter of life and death for pilots trying to avoid bird strikes.

# FAA Intercom

inputs for backup data. More than 30 electronic systems will be installed to support the facility.

Phase I commissioning — during which Atlanta TRACON operations will be transferred to Peachtree City — is scheduled for November.

Consolidation of the Macon and Columbus operations is scheduled for August 2001.

**Civil Aviation Security Debuts Core Comp Site**
The Office of Civil Aviation Security has inaugurated a new Core Compensation Web site on the Intranet. It provides information concerning events, policies and announcements related to Core Compensation specifically related to employees in Civil Aviation Security. It is designed to supplement the FAA's main Core Compensation Web site.

The Civil Aviation Security site is at http://security.faa.gov/core/. The FAA's main Core Compensation Web site is located at http://www.faa.gov/corecomp/.

**Sea-Tac Tower Contract Awarded**
The FAA awarded a $19.6 million contract for construction of a new airport traffic control tower and base building at Seattle-Tacoma International to PCL Construction Services, Inc. of Bellevue.

The new tower will stand 233 ft. tall, more than 100 feet taller than the current tower. It will be topped by an 850-sq. ft. cab. The base building will be about 18,000 sq. ft. The tower cab will allow controllers to view planes and ground vehicles throughout the airfield, including the planned third runway. The base building will house administrative and maintenance offices.

Construction is expected to start this month, with completion expected in the summer of 2001. Tower commissioning is planned for the summer of 2003.



The new Atlanta Large TRACON occupies more than 35 acres of land.

**ICAO Openings Announced**
The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is seeking candidates to fill the following positions:

**Montreal**
PC-99/30/P-O
Chief, Aviation Security and Facilitation Branch

**Cairo**
PC-99/32/P-4
Regional Officer, Aerodromes
Air Routes and Ground AIDS Section

PC-99/33/P-3
Regional Officer
Aeronautical Information and Charts Section

Applications for the Montreal position is due in API-19 by Feb. 25. Those for the Cairo positions are due March 30. Access the API Web page at http://api.hq.faa.gov.

**Facts at Your Fingertips**
Wondering how many flight delays the National Airspace System experienced in February 1999? Need to know how many passenger miles were flown in the United States in 1998?

Employees now may access the Administrator's Fact Book on the FAA Web site. The fact book comes out monthly and contains a wide variety of information on such topics as airports, airmen, aircraft, FAA air traffic and commercial space transportation.

Access the site by clicking on "Newsroom," scroll down to "Reports, Publications & Documents" and click on "Administrator's Fact Book."

By the way, there were 19,851 flight delays in February 1999, and more than 605 billion passenger miles were flown in 1998.

# STARS Displays Garner Good Reviews

better resolution to reduce eyestrain. The human factors associated with the new displays allow controllers to more efficiently operate the equipment. Presentation of data is greatly improved and eases tracking of aircraft.

Controllers soon will have access to real-time weather intensity information, a feature recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board.

With El Paso and Syracuse now operating the Early Display Configuration of STARS, the next step will be to deploy a full-service system at Eglin AFB, Fla., and other Department of Defense sites.

Additional computer modifications are being made to this full-service system for FAA use. The full-service system will be deployed first at El Paso and Syracuse. Once agreement is reached that the system is operationally suitable and acceptable, full-scale deployment throughout the FAA will begin.

The system will experience an even greater jump in capability when new software is developed to back it up. A full-service system incorporating new software will be deployed at Eglin AFB, Fla., and other Department of Defense sites for testing. Once the proper configuration of hardware and software is ascertained, full-scale deployment throughout the FAA will begin.

When STARS is fully developed, the FAA can count on reduced lifecycle costs through the use of common hardware and software. The displays also will be easier and cheaper to upgrade than current models.

Maintenance, too, will be easier. Ron Farrar, a technical support staff technician at the Independence System Management

Controllers Eli Elizondo (foreground) and Henry Munoz work the new STARS displays. Standing is Stephen Atkinson, El Paso TRACON air traffic manager.

Office in West Trenton, N.J., said STARS is "a great relief to technicians in the field." STARS maintenance is done by using a hand-held remote control not unlike those used for televisions, and a menu-driven system. It will save time and effort compared to repair of the old displays.

**Cooperation Hailed**

Perhaps as important as the technology itself is the way in which it was developed. The agency's decision to work with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association and Professional Airways System Specialists unions has pleased both controllers and Airway Facilities specialists.

Henry Munoz, an air traffic control specialist and NATCA president for the El Paso TRACON, described FAA cooperation with the controllers as a "pretty positive experience." He said the program office, human factors group and unions were very honest with the controllers about past problems with STARS and what solutions were being planned to improve the system. Controllers at El Paso were flown to Atlantic City, N.J., for a preliminary look at the equipment after agreed-upon human factors changes were made.

He cited an issue with data tags — airline flight information that accompanies a plane's radar blip on the controller's screen — as an example of how things are handled in the new cooperative working environment. Controllers preferred the data tag to appear above the radar blip instead of slightly off to the side, which created an awkward view for controllers. Changes were made overnight.

"That's a big reason for the success of STARS," Munoz said. "Being part of the team made us feel we weren't just being given a bill of goods or forced to use it." He expressed hope that the FAA will use the process as a model for dealing with future installations and upgrades.

Administrator Jane Garvey visited both sites and promised to continue working with the unions and the contractor to make sure STARS is operationally suitable and acceptable for controllers when it's deployed throughout the National Airspace System.

Raytheon is under contract to install STARS at 173 FAA TRACONs over the next 10 years.

FAA Intercom

# Looking Back on IT Progress at the FAA

Few employees think about it, but the complicated technology that drives their computers — and the policies and procedures that govern information technology — is the constant concern of a wide network of employees at the FAA.

The focal point, however, for all issues concerning the safe and efficient transmission of agency data is the agency's chief information officer, Dan Mehan. He has been the driving force for several agency-wide information technology initiatives since he took over the new office a year ago.

Mehan recently paused to reflect on how far his organization — the Office of Information Services — has come and the challenges ahead to ensure the efficient and secure electronic movement of information throughout the agency.

Improving the transmission of information in an agency as technologically driven as the FAA is no small job. "Managing information flow will be a big effort over the long term," Mehan predicted, in part because over the years the FAA has constructed many databases that lack the ability to talk to each other. "It's a common problem in government and industry," said Mehan, who saw a similar situation at AT&T, where he was vice president of quality and process management before joining the agency.

The proliferation of databases that need to talk to each other and the fast-changing nature of information technology present significant challenges. But the cooperation he said he has received from the lines of business and the outstanding skill level and dedication of FAA employees are important *assets* for the agency as it strives to meet that challenge.

**Initial Progress**

In March 1999, seven weeks after joining the agency, Mehan signed off on the FAA's Critical Infrastructure Protection Plan, the agency's response to a presidential directive on information security. "Unlike Y2K, which had a specific date and fix associated with it, information systems security and the ongoing protection of the agency's critical infrastructure from various forms of cyber attack will be a continuing challenge over the early years of the new millennium," Mehan said.

Studies concerning the vulnerability of the agency's computer systems have been conducted and training has begun to inform FAA employees about basic security awareness. "It's not enough to develop a security strategy," he explained. "We must make sure our people and outside constituencies understand it."

On a broader front, the Office of Information Services set the groundwork for the future of information technology by developing strategies for overall information technology and data management. The information technology strategy was developed to ensure that the agency's budget for fiscal years 2000-2002 was properly earmarked for its evolving information technology needs.

The data management strategy calls for, among other things, increased data sharing and data management collaboration. The development of these strategies was a major accomplishment, considering the complexity of the FAA's computer systems and the acceptance across many lines of business that is necessary to reach a common solution.

**Next Steps**

Looking ahead, the Office of Information Services plans to develop a repository of all FAA databases, the type of information they contain, and the employees who maintain them. This repository for the first time will provide an easy and quick reference for employees who are searching for specific types of information.

The agency also needs to improve its processes to make them reach maximum efficiency.

And in the area of information security, the agency needs to improve its systems security architecture. In the long term, employees will see dramatic changes in this area. The proliferation of passwords, for example, has caused confusion and some undesirable practices, such as using one's birth date as a password.

Mehan's staff is exploring the use of smart cards or biometrics — using fingerprints or other unique human features as a means of authorizing a person to access a computer — but use of this technology is still several years away for the FAA.

In 2000, Mehan's focus will remain on IT strategy, investment, policy, and process. By focusing on these objectives and inviting the lines of business into the solution-making process, the FAA will be able to make the most progress in the shortest amount of time.

# People

## In Memoriam

Timothy Forté, former FAA director of the Great Lakes Region, died in a car accident in Daytona Beach, Fla., on Jan. 12. He was 49.

Forté served as regional administrator from September 1988 to May 1990. He was aviation safety director at Embry Riddle University at the time of his death. Prior to that, he was director of the Office of Aviation Safety at the National Transportation Safety Board.

His wife, Karen, four sons, his mother, sister and brother survive him.
At the request of the family, donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the Timothy P. Forté Scholarship Fund, c/o Laura Porter, Office of Development, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 600 S. Clyde Morris Blvd., Daytona Beach, FL 32114-3900.
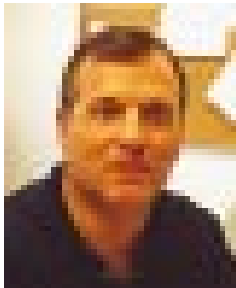


Timothy Forté

## Maillett to Head Special Project

Louise Maillett has been selected by Administrator Jane Garvey to serve as point person on the Performance Based Organization the agency will be promoting to Congress this session. Maillett had been acting associate administrator for Airports since last June.

Maillett's assignment is to assess how far the FAA has progressed in running the air traffic system as a more business-like operation, and what needs to be done to further develop the agency's fee-for-service concept.

Woodie Woodward, director of the Center for Management Development, will be acting associate administrator until a permanent replacement is found.



Louise Maillett

## Bauerlein Takes New Assignment

Joan Bauerlein, who has been the FAA's director of International Aviation for the last 10 years, has begun an assignment as senior advisor for transportation at the InterAmerican Development Bank. The length of the assignment is about 18 months, when she is expected to return to the agency. John Hancock will be acting director in the interim.

In her new role, Bauerlein will support the Department of Transportation's



Joan Bauerlein

"Partnership for Safer Skies with Latin America," and will continue to work with the FAA, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Air Traffic Association, and other groups to find funding for aviation nfrastructure programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Office of International Aviation develops policy; provides liaison with other U.S. agencies, foreign governments and international organizations; represents the FAA abroad; and supports FAA international operations.

## Moore to Head Airway Facilities

Alan Moore has been named acting director of Airway Facilities, replacing Stan Rivers who retired at the end of last year. Moore had been deputy director of Airways Facilities since April 1997. Prior to that, he was Airway Facilities Division manager in the Central Region.



Alan Moore

Bob Long, program director for NAS Transition and Integration, will be acting deputy director. Deborah A. Johnson, deputy director to Bob Long, will be acting in his place until further notice.

# FAA Intercom

# Parting Words

### Zaidman Announces Management Changes

Steve Zaidman, associate administrator for Research and Acquisitions, has selected Carl McCullough as director of the Office of Communications, Navigation, and Surveillance. McCullough, currently deputy director of Air Traffic Systems Development, replaces Shelly Myers who left the agency last year.

Carl McCullough

     Dan Salvano, who had been acting director of Communications, Navigation, and Surveillance, returns to his position as deputy director.

     Greg Burke, deputy director of the Office of System Architecture and Investment Analysis, will become the deputy director of Air Traffic Systems Development, replacing McCullough.

### Archer Selected NAAN President

Boyd Archer has been named president of the Native American/Alaska Native (NAAN) Coalition for Federal Aviation Employees. He replaces Nanette Waller, who recently left the agency to become a social worker for the Department of Health and Human Services on a reservation in South Dakota.

     Archer, support manager for quality assurance at the Washington Dulles Air Traffic Control Tower, has been with the FAA for 30 years.

### Flight Assist Earns Controller an Award

Air Traffic Control Specialist Robert Greene received a "Point with Pride" award from the Southern Region for an outstanding flight assist in May 1999.

     The pilot of a Piper Saratoga flying over the Atlantic Ocean 30 miles from West Palm Beach International Airport reported a rough-running engine. The pilot doubted he could reach the coast before the engine gave out. Greene took immediate action to obtain assistance from another aircraft in the area in the event of a water landing. Greene's efforts helped ensure safety until the aircraft was able to land at West Palm Beach.

     Air Traffic Manager Justo Casablanca also accepted a plaque, presented by Southern Region Resource Management Branch Specialist Ken Berkey, on behalf of the facility in recognition of the award.

Greene is flanked by Casablanca (left) and Berkey upon receiving an award for a flight assist.

The FAA is asking employees who leave the agency to fill out a questionnaire about their experiences working here.

     The separation questionnaire now is part of the employee clearance process. It is voluntary and intended to obtain feedback from employees and gather information the FAA can use to improve its work environment.

     The form asks employees about their job satisfaction, and reasons for separating from the agency. It also gathers basic background data, as well as more specific information, such as how many monetary or time-off awards the employee received in the preceding two years.

     The Office of Civil Rights, the Office of Human Resource Management and the Civil Aeromedical Institute jointly developed the questionnaire. It was coordinated with the lines of business, employee associations, and the unions.

     CAMI has distributed questionnaires to all region/center Human Resource Management Divisions. It takes only a few minutes to fill out and should be completed before the employee leaves. Managers and employees involved in the employee clearance process are asked to encourage employees to complete the questionnaire as they separate from the agency. This includes retiring employees.

     CAMI will process the questionnaires. In the event an envelope is not provided or is misplaced, the questionnaire should be mailed to: FAA Survey Center, AAM-520, Civil Aeromedical Institute, P.O. Box 25082, Oklahoma City, OK 73125.

     Employees may contact their local Human Resource Management Division for further information.

     Additional copies of the questionnaire may be downloaded from the FAA Intraweb at: http://interweb.faa.gov/ahr/. Scroll down to "Other Useful Sites," click on "HR Community Resources" and "Separation Questionnaire."

# Slater, Garvey Thank Employees for Y2K Success

## FAA Faces Final Y2K Leap at Month's End

Caught up in the afterglow of Y2K success that seemed to light up the Headquarters auditorium, who could blame Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater and Administrator Jane Garvey for looking like proud parents.

The two leaders participated in the FAA Year 2000 Program, an event planned as one big thank-you to employees for their work in curing the millennium bug. Beaming in person and on film taken over New Year's Eve, Slater's pride was quite evident. He singled out the FAA and the Coast Guard as the two modes of transportation that had the majority of DOT systems potentially affected by Y2K.

The FAA's ability to respond success-fully to a major challenge bodes well for the agency in its modernization and budget authorization processes, he said. "You delivered on these programs and you delivered well." In the process, he noted, the agency provided leadership for the world.

Garvey took an even more personal tack. She recalled with fondness the

Slater and Garvey share a moment during the ceremony.

opportunities she had meeting with controllers and technicians in Washington, D.C., Dallas and San Francisco during her transcontinental flight. It was their work and the work of all employees that made her so appreciative. "I don't think I could have been prouder of an organization than I was of the FAA on New Year's eve," she said.

Mary Powers-King, FAA Y2K Program manager, emceed the event.

The agency's success extended beyond Y2K and safety, she added, because it "did so much for the credibility of the agency and the government." It changed the tenor of conversation about aviation "in a way that was very positive and upbeat."

Garvey also mentioned the sacrifices that FAA families made on New Year's Eve and throughout the year while mothers and fathers, husbands and wives worked overtime to keep the skies safe.

A ceremony followed in which Y2K managers accepted awards on behalf of their lines of business and various teams.

It's bad enough the year 2000 brought all the concern over the Y2K bug. Now they've gone and added another day.

Since February 2000 is a leap month, the FAA will be on heightened awareness Feb.28-March 1 to make sure that the Y2K bug hasn't found a nest in the extra day.

Mark Noonan, communications manager for the FAA Y2K Program, explained there is a remote possibility of Y2K problems at the end of February because some computer calendars might not have accounted for this 366-day year.

The FAA took the leap year into account when it was preparing for the Y2K rollover, and testing indicated there would be no interruptions. Still, the FAA Y2K staffs will be vigilant, although it's unlikely around-the-clock staffing like that of Dec. 31 will be necessary.

"There's no reason to assume these systems weren't corrected for the leap year," Noonan said. "We just have to wait for the date to arrive to prove everything's okay." Noonan said systems that calculate formulas based on the number of days in a cycle could be vulnerable, although it's highly unlikely.

Likewise, the Office of Air Traffic Services expects no problems, but will increase staffing during the 3-day period. "Major air traffic control systems likely won't be affected," noted Robert Scarbrough, the ATS Y2K program manager. "We've worked hard and are confident the flying public will not notice any service interruptions due to Y2K."

In fact, Air Traffic Services tested the dates of Feb. 29 and Dec. 31, 2000, Jan. 1, 2001 and other dates projected through 2027 on its systems. None showed susceptibility to date-change problems. Once the FAA clears the leap month, the agency's Y2K offices will start closing up shop. By the end of the month, detail employees will go back to their original assignments, borrowed computers returned, and loaned space vacated. Y2K will be history.

## Emphasizing Info Sharing over Enforcement
*continued from page 1*

# FAA Gets TIPS on Screener Performance

seek to protect their members' jobs.

The agency does reserve the right to take enforcement action in cases involving substance or alcohol abuse, or intentional falsification of documents. Those cases will be prosecuted.

Employees also now have the ability to report safety concerns in which they are not personally involved. Pilots experiencing runway marking problems or difficulty with approach procedures at a certain airport can report their concerns. Employees who report safety concerns within their companies are protected from reprisal under the program.

An Executive Review Committee comprising representatives from the FAA, airline management and unions will review the reports and offer recommendations.

ASAP is part of a new culture in which the FAA replaces a passive, reactionary approach towards safety with a program that actively seeks to prevent safety incidents and cut commercial aviation accidents before they occur. The administration's goal is to reduce aviation accidents by 80 percent by 2007.

The ASAP plan announced by Clinton focuses on gathering of aviation data from industry employees.

A new system installed at airport checkpoints will assess the performance of screeners

In an effort to improve the performance of security screeners at airports, the FAA has proposed a rule that requires agency certification for companies the airlines hire to perform this service.

The rule would set standards of performance for companies providing security screening, strengthen training and testing standards for screeners, and impose more stringent experience and training requirements on screening company managers and instructors.

It would make screening companies accountable, along with air carriers, for screener performance and training.

To help measure screeners' performance, the agency is spending about $60 million to deploy an automated screener testing system that runs on checkpoint X-ray machines at airports. The Threat Image Projection (TIP) system projects fictitious electronic images of guns, knives

and explosives devices into real and ficticious carry-on items on the X-ray machines to monitor screeners' ability to detect threats. Once screeners detect the images, TIP notifies them that the threats are not real and records their performance in a database that the FAA can access to analyze performance.

More than 1,400 TIP systems will be purchased in the future. An initial order of 420 has been placed with deployment planned this spring.

The proposed rule responds to a key recommendation by the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security.

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# Taking Account



*Barbara J. Smith, director of the FAA Accountability Board, answers questions about the board's process.*

**Should all allegations/incidents of hostile work environment be reported to the board?**

No. This is a common misperception of the board process. Only those allegations or incidents of hostile work environment that result from sexual harassment or misconduct of a sexual nature should be reported.

**I often hear the board referred to as the "SHAB" (Sexual Harassment Accountability Board). Does this mean that behavior is not "sexual harassment," it is not a board issue?**

First, the term SHAB is a misnomer. The official name of the board is the "Accountability Board," not the "Sexual Harassment Accountability Board." Unfortunately, this term has contributed to the misperception that if an allegation does not rise to a level of sexual harassment, it's not an issue for the board. This is not the case. If the allegation involves misconduct of a sexual nature, it is under the purview of the board and must be reported.

**Is the participation of Human Resource specialists in the board process optional?**

No. The FAA requires coordination of all board cases with the appropriate human resource specialist throughout the process, including final decisions issued on proposed disciplinary actions, as well as decisions made on subsequent grievances or settlements.

An HR specialist must be consulted when interviewing the complaining party to ensure appropriate questions are asked, and when notifying the individual against who an allegation is made (i.e., the respondent) in case there are unique circumstances that must be considered prior to notification.

The specialist must also be consulted about how the management inquiry should be conducted and what specific questions should be asked. Once an internal inquiry or formal investigation has been completed, the specialist must be consulted when reviewing the facts and determining whether to take corrective or disciplinary action.

Finally, the specialist must be consulted prior to giving feedback to both the complaining party and the respondent.

**Is coordination with the Office of Civil Rights required?**

No. However, there is a requirement to coordinate with the Office of Civil Rights with regard to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints process. Any decision that results in an adverse or disciplinary action, change in duty station or job assignment, or supervision of an employee who has contacted an EEO counselor or filed a discrimination complaint must be coordinated with the assistant administrator for Civil Rights. Employees in the field should work through their regional Civil Rights officer.

## PASS Contract Signed

negotiated with the agency for more than a year. Early last fall, both sides began mediation talks through the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to reach the accord.

The parties agreed not to disclose specific provisions of the contract, pending ratification. In general, however, the agreement reflects the agency's modernization effort and its move to a market-based, pay-for-performance system. It is also in line with the FAA's new "core compensation" system being adopted agency wide.

In return for higher pay levels, the union has agreed to maintain current staffing levels.

"We believe this is a fair and reasonable agreement for the agency and the members of PASS," said Steve Brown, associate administrator for Air Traffic. "It means that we can meet the legitimate pay concerns of our technicians and other staff represented by PASS, improve overall efficiency, maintain our high standards of safety, and stay within the tight constraints imposed by our budget."

Mike Fanfalone, PASS president, agreed, saying, "I believe that this agreement is one that will meet the needs of both the FAA and members of PASS. The final agreement was crafted through a sincere attempt to provide job security, training on new technologies, and a fair and equitable pay system."

# Core Compensation: Sixty Days and Counting

*The Corporate Core Compensation Implementation Team provides a status report on the schedule for implementation of the Core Compensation plan.*

**Conversion is on Schedule**
About 6,500 non-bargaining unit employees and managers will go into the Core Compensation Plan, effective April 23. Employees will receive an information sheet identifying the details of their conversion.

**Comp Training is Underway.**
♦ Managers and supervisors across the agency are participating in two-day training sessions.
♦ Employee training will begin in February. It will include a video featuring FAA employees and their impromptu thoughts about core compensation.
♦ More than 3,500 employees will have an opportunity to attend the training before implementation.

**Comp Estimator is Available.**
· This automated tool is available to help employees going under the Core Compensation System to better understand the likely impact of the core compensation plan.
· The Estimator enables employees to estimate their pay at conversion (April 23) and to project what will happen to their pay over the next five years.
· Go to www.faa.gov/corecomp/ to use the Estimator.

**OSI Performance Goals Are Being Finalized**
♦ The agency is determining its performance goals for Fiscal Year 2000. Agency performance against these goals will determine whether employees receive an Organizational Success Increase to base pay.
♦ These goals will be linked to organization objectives, such as those included in the FAA Strategic Plan and agency performance plans.
♦ The goals will be widely communicated as soon as possible prior to the April 2000 implementation of the Core Comp Plan.
♦ At the end of the fiscal year, in September 2000, the administrator will assess the agency's performance against the OSI goals. This assessment will determine the actual percent pay increase for eligible employees.
♦ The OSI pay increase will be effective in December 2000 or January 2001.
♦ To be eligible for the OSI, employees must have: met minimum performance require-ments (i.e., a performance rating that "meets expectations" or the equivalent); not received a disciplinary action for suspension, demotion, or conduct or performance; and at least 90 days of continuous service under the Core Plan immediately prior to the end of the fiscal year.

**Bargaining Unit Implications**
Employees in bargaining units will come under the compensation program that is negotiated between their union and the agency. Employees whose positions are covered by a pending union petition will remain in the current FG system for now. If these employees become covered by a bargaining unit, the agency will complete bargaining before making changes to their compensation system. The Core Compensation system will serve as the agency's compensation proposal in such negotiations.



Ronald Kogut from the Office of Civil Aviation Security Operations is asked about his views of the Core Compensation Plan for a video to be shown during employee training.

*Employees may cc:Mail questions concerning Core Compensation to the following address: 9-AWA-Compensation.*

# Houston, We Have a Winner

The Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center will receive Vice President Gore's Hammer Award for innovation in improving government service.

The center is being recognized for leading the development of the only non-radar, stand-alone Global Positioning System route structure in the world. It was developed to assist helicopter operations transporting more than 35,000 oil industry workers to more than 4,000 platforms and vessels in the Gulf of Mexico. More than 600 helicopters fly 5,000 to 9,000 operations per day in the gulf.

For years, Instrument Flight Rules operations were limited to a few defined routes that rarely provided direct flights to offshore locations. Companies experienced increased flight time, reduced payloads, and increased fuel costs, as well as excessive delays due to the antiquated navigational system in use. Delays of more than one hour were common, costing helicopter operators an average of $250,000 - $300,000 per hour.

The new GPS route structure, commonly called the "grid system," creates an air traffic grid made up of satellite signals that offers operators direct routes between shore and oilrigs. During the design of this system, Houston Center sought an air traffic system that would be easy for pilots and air traffic controllers to use and allow more helicopter flights without affecting safety.

Using the grid system is saving customers an estimated $5 million per year. Helicopter operators report the average flight time has been reduced by 10 minutes, which translates to an average of $100 saved per IFR flight. During the first nine months, there were no air traffic delays associated with the grid system.

Most importantly, it's making helicopter operations safer. Prior to use of the grid system, it wasn't uncommon for



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operators to try to fly under visual flight rules in less-than-ideal weather conditions because it saved them time and money. The grid system allows them to use their instruments in poor visibility and still take more direct routes.

Development of the grid system has dramatically enhanced both the quality and safety of air traffic operations within the Gulf of Mexico.

Raul Trevino, air traffic manager at Houston Center, said the facility was honored by the award. "The men and women of Houston Center are always striving to improve the qualityof the service we provide. It took effort by everyone at the facility to create the GPS route structure and we deeply appreciate this special recognition."